

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

March 30, 2011

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton:

We are writing to express our concern regarding Iran's persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued imprisonment of seven Baha'i leaders. We are particularly concerned with reports that Iranian officials have recently moved these leaders to more brutal and dangerous sections of Iran's Gohardasht Prison.

As you know, in March and May of 2008, Iranian intelligence officials arrested and imprisoned seven members of a coordinating group for Baha'is in Iran – Mrs. Fariba Kamalabadi, Mr. Jamaloddin Khanjani, Mr. Afif Naeimi, Mr. Saeid Rezaie, Mr. Behrouz Tavakkoli, Mrs. Mahvash Sabet, and Mr. Vahid Tizfahm. In January 2010, after being incarcerated without charge for 20 months, the seven faced a trial that consisted of six brief court appearances. During their incarceration, they were only permitted to meet with their legal representation for an hour. In August 2010, the Revolutionary Court in Tehran sentenced the seven to 20 years in prison on charges of “spying for Israel, insulting religious sanctities, propaganda against the regime and spreading corruption on earth.”

The trial was widely condemned by human rights organizations and governments around the world. On August 12, 2010, you joined the chorus of international criticism, saying, “The United States strongly condemns this sentencing as a violation of Iran's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.” You also said that the United States would continue to speak out against injustice in Iran.

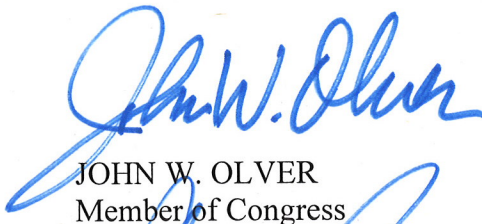
Soon after their sentencing, the leaders were transferred from Tehran's Evin prison to Gohardasht prison, west of Tehran. On September 15, 2010, the lawyers representing the seven received word orally that the 20 year sentences had been reduced to 10 years. This has not been confirmed in writing, however.

On February 12, 2011, the seven were transferred again to a harsher section of Gohardasht prison. According to relatives who have been able to speak to them briefly, they are now incarcerated in cramped and unsanitary cell blocks alongside violent criminals. The brother of

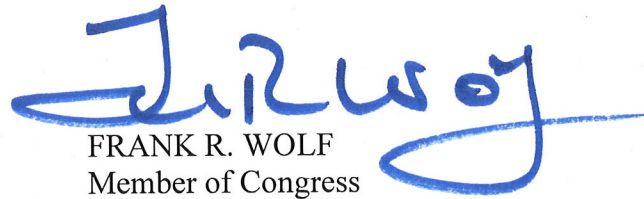
Mr. Jamaloddin Khanjani has told the US Commission for International Religious Freedom that five prisoners are crammed into a 10 by 16 foot cell. According to Bani Dugal, the principal representative of the Baha'i International Community to the United Nations, Mrs. Kamalabadi and Mrs. Sabet were told that, prior to their move, the prisoners in their new section had been "warned" about them. Mrs. Kamalabadi has since been physically threatened by fellow inmates in the new section of the prison.

The arrest and imprisonment of these seven leaders is part of a long history of persecution of Baha'is in Iran. We urge you to continue to speak out against this persecution and to advocate for the release of those who have been wrongfully imprisoned. We also urge you, in accordance with the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 and Executive Order 13553 to sanction Iranian officials and any other individuals responsible for human rights violations in Iran.

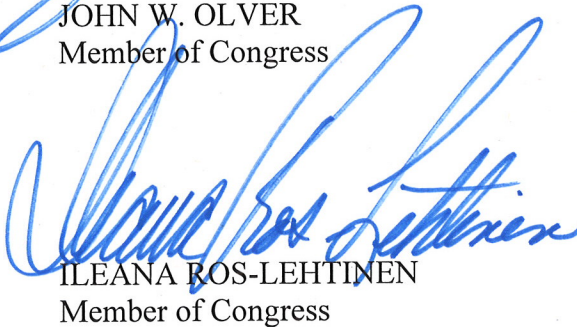
Sincerely,



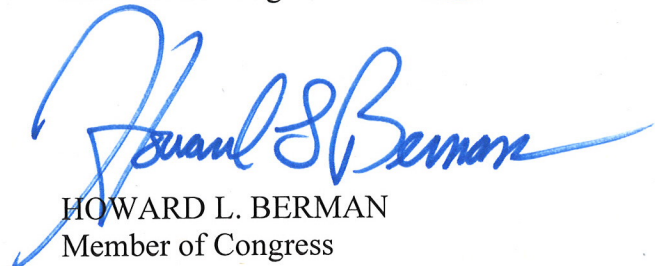
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Member of Congress



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ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN
Member of Congress



HOWARD L. BERMAN
Member of Congress



SHELLEY BERKLEY
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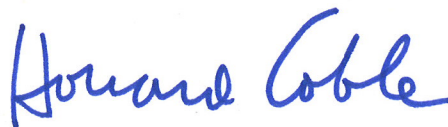
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Member of Congress



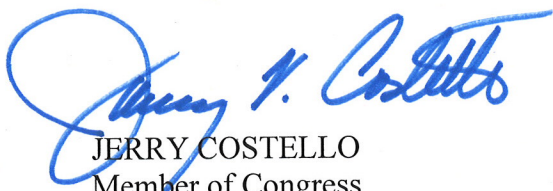
DAN BURTON
Member of Congress



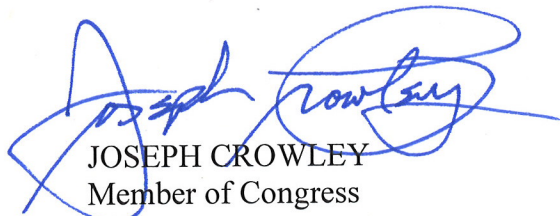
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Member of Congress



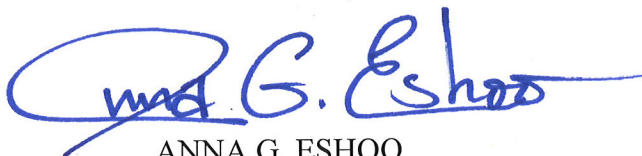
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Member of Congress



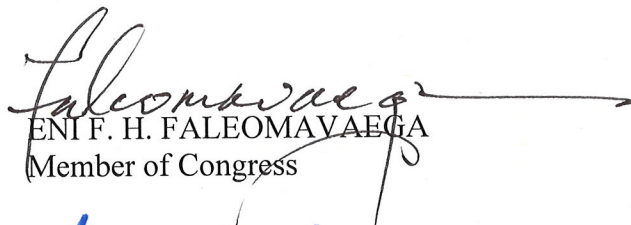
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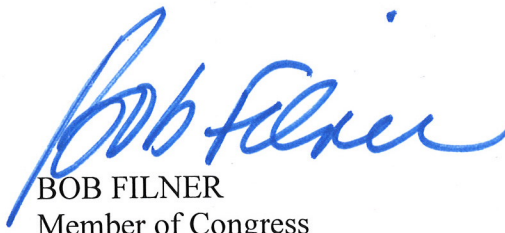
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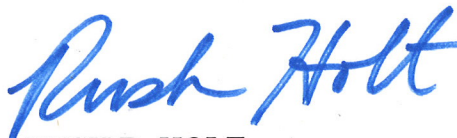
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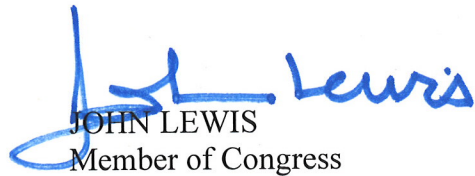
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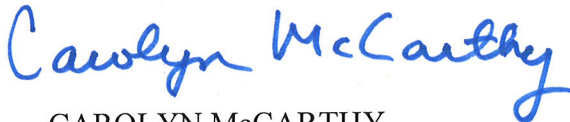
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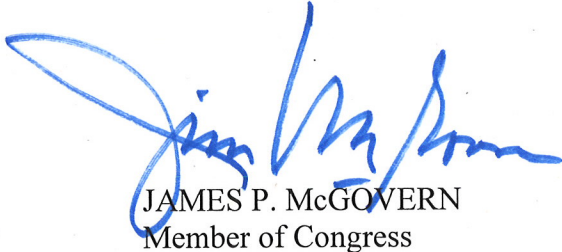
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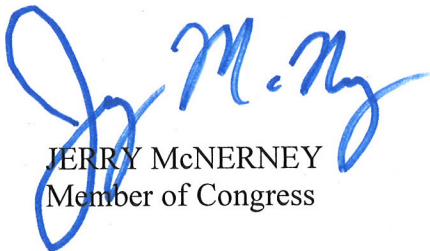
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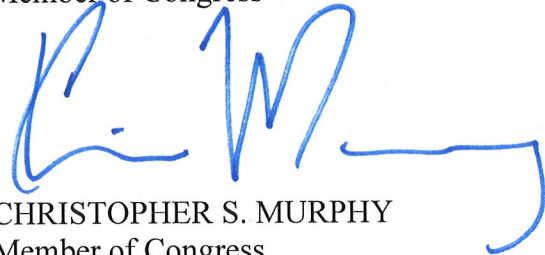
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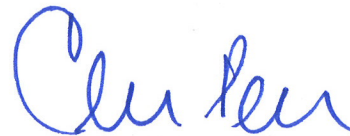
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Member of Congress



CHELLIE PINGREE
Member of Congress



JOSEPH R. PITTS
Member of Congress



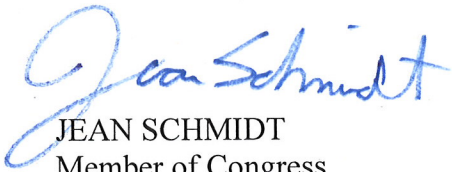
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